

Kentucky Election Information

2005 County Committee Elections

What is FSA?

The mission of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is to help ensure the well-being of American agriculture and the American public through efficient and equitable administration of the following programs:

- Farm commodity
- Farm loan
- Conservation
- Environmental
- Emergency assistance
- Domestic and international food assistance

FSA strives to provide friendly and efficient customer service to enhance the ability of the small, limited-resource, beginning, and socially disadvantaged family farmers and ranchers to operate successfully. FSA also provides innovative leadership to improve and reduce the cost of operations and services.

FSA is responsible for:

- Supporting commodity prices and producer income, through loans, purchases, and direct payments;
- Balancing supply and demand for certain commodities;
- Providing emergency and non-insured assistance programs;
- Conserving production resources and protecting the environment, through cost-sharing and conservation reserve contracts with producers; and
- Providing a program of supervised credit and loan guarantees to ensure credit is available to farmers unable to obtain funds to operate a successful farm business

FSA County Committees

County offices administer all FSA programs. The County Committee (COC) is a grassroots approach to give farmers and ranchers a much-needed say in how federal actions affect their communities and individual operations. The COC is accountable to the State Committee (STC); oversees the work of the county office and the County Executive Director (CED) who manages the county office; and acts in an advisory capacity to the Farm Loan Manager (FLM)

The County Committee system goes back to the 1930s, when Congress set up a system in which federal farm programs were administered locally. The members on County Committees are nominated and elected by local producers who are eligible to participate in FSA programs.

The COC is democracy in action. Once elected by their peers to the committee, local producers make important decisions about how FSA programs will be carried out in the county. They are a direct link between the farm community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The COC also acts as a board of directors for the county office.

Each COC consists of three to five members. The committee may also include advisors who are appointed by the State Committee to advocate for underrepresented groups and assist in outreach activities. The COC must see that programs are consistent with federal law, regulations, policies, procedures, and instructions.

The COC has four major areas of responsibility:

- Producers
- Programs
- Public information/outreach
- Equal opportunity

Committees make decisions on:

- Commodity price support loans and payments;
- Establishment of allotments, yields, and marketing quotas; conservation programs;
- Incentive, indemnity, and disaster payments for some commodities; other farm disaster assistance.

To carry out its responsibilities, the County Committee:

- Hires and supervises the CED;
- Reviews work plans, operations, and finances;
- Hears requests for reconsiderations or appeals of county decisions; and
- Makes recommendations to the State Committee.

County Committee Elections

Each summer, it's time to nominate and then vote for farmers to serve on the Farm Service Agency County Committees across the state. FSA urges all producers to seriously consider running for a term on the County Committee.

Important dates for this year's election

- ✓ June 15 Request nomination forms from the local FSA office and begin making nominations.
- ✓ August 15 Last day to file nomination forms with the FSA office. (Extended)
- ✓ November 4 Ballots mailed to eligible voters.
- ✓ December 5 Last day to return voted and signed ballots to the FSA office.
- ✓ January 1, 2006 Elected committee members and alternates take office.

Who Can Vote

Farm owners, operators, tenants, and sharecroppers of legal voting age can vote if they are eligible to take part in *any* FSA program. In a community property state, spouses may also be eligible to vote. Check with your local FSA office for more information.

Nominations

A nomination form signed by the nominee is needed to nominate a farmer-candidate. The form includes a statement that the candidate agrees to serve if elected. Nomination forms must be received in the local office by August 15.

Almost anyone eligible to take part in a local FSA program may be a candidate for the committee.

Nomination forms are available on the Internet: www.fsa.usda.gov.

Don't Miss Out on Voting!

The 2005 election will end December 5. Ballots will be mailed to voters by November 4. They must be completed and signed, then return them to the FSA county office by December 5.

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